(Rev. 6-72

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SEE

Form 10-300 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR (Rev. 6-72) NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Kansas

STATE:

Geary

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY - NOMINATION FORM

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STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The first territorial legislature of Kansas was called by Gov. Andrew H. Reeder to meet in Pawnee on July 2, 1855. The governor was a member of the Pawnee Town Association which had laid out the new town adjacent to the Fort Riley Military Reservation.

The legislature met in a large two-story native stone warehouse built by the Pawnee Town Association. The lower floor was used as the house chamber and the senate occupied the upper floor.

Most of the members of the legislature were Proslavery adherents from border towns and many of them had interests in Missouri. Consequently they felt Pawnee was too far west and too isolated to be the capital. So they passed a law on July 4 providing for the temporary establishment of the capital at Shawnee Mission in Johnson county. The governor vetoed this on July 6, but the legislature passed the law over his veto and promptly adjourned to meet at Shawnee Mission July 16.

The town of Pawnee went out of existence in the fall of 1855 when it was found to be within the boundaries of the Fort Riley reservation. For a time the former capitol was used as an army warehouse, but then it was allowed to deteriorate into ruins.

A major reconstruction project in 1927, financed mainly by the Union Pacific railroad on whose right of way the building partly stands, returned the building as nearly as possible to its condition in 1855. After the preservation work was completed, the Union Pacific railroad presented the building to the state of Kansas, and it is now operated as a museum by the State Historical Society.